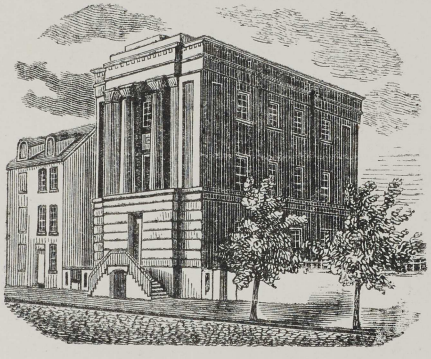
AN ESSAY ON

The Physician.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE



HOMŒOPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGE

OF PENNSYLVANIA,

On the 16th day of January, Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-seven

By Thomas Putnam.

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When we look around us, and see the misery and want which pervades the human family; when we see sickness and death stalking forth in all their might and pompous power; choosing the fairest and most lovely of our race; when we see man, the noblest of God's creatures, endowed with faculty supreme, in possession of judgment profound, and perception acute; reveling in acts evil to his nature, and detrimental to his health; when we see disease and pestilence walking forth at noon day choosing a lovely child here a devoted mother there, or striking down an affectionate father, we are led to exclaim with wonder and astonishment; is there no help, no succor; cannot these awful effects of sin be avoided or

alleviated; is there no kind hand that will interpose, and shield, protect us
guide us from calamities so ample in
effect and grievous in endurance;
Yes: methinks I see one coming decked in
garments of peace, With the mystic crown-
ing his head; and a heart of love burn-
ing in his breast:
He comes, yes the physician comes nobly
and courageously to the charge, he comes
devoid of offence, he comes if needs be
a martyr to the cause; denying himself
the luxuries of life; despising the honors
of the world, and assuming upon him-
self the office of our saviour, he goes forth
to heal the sick, bind up the wounds
of the wounded, to brush away the tear
of sorrow, to comfort the mourning, to

strengthen the weak, and to give energy and vitality unto to the depressed and fallen. What a noble work this, a life of usefulness, a life of denyal, a man after Gods own heart.

Let us endeavor to analyse and portray the predominate characteristic model for this great undertaken.

First qualification necessary to become a true physician secondly his character.

To prepare oneself to become a warrior, to prepare oneself for a merchant prince all attainments common to all: but he who prepare himself to enter this great field of battle, and successfully contend against disease; has no small work before him no easy task to accomplish; it requires patience, self command, perseverance; and

above all a love to do good; he must fully prepare himself in the great school of patience, for without that he cannot accomplish anything: who would think of solving a difficult problem, or undertake to execute a splendid painting; or to teach the young without patience; much more to prepare oneself for a physician; to unravel the mysteries of complex theories, to fully understand the mannikin of anatomy; to master materia medica; and last but not least to make oneself acquainted with the human frame, so beautifully and wonderfully made; to pursue these; I repeat requires more than the patience of the patriarch of old, hence we are students heard to exclaim, I can never understand this, or accomplish that; but let such remember that patience

begats everything; what it was this that placed Newton on the mountain top of fame, what it was this that carried our noble Washington, through the long and dreary contest of the revolution; what it was patience that caused a webster, a Clay and and other great men to shine so beautifully, so gloriously; and he who would undertake the study of medicine without first acquiring this attribute, will soon turn wearily, and hopelessly aside.

Self command is indispensibly necessary: for who I ask is more often placed in trying and critical situations? Who I ask has to contend with more frequent odds: Who I ask has life, with all its beauties to save, and death in its many forms to overcome. Is it the warrior? I answer no,

the frights a seen foe, an object dismaable to the natural sight; while the physician contends against an enemy who lurks in the humane system ~~nor~~ dan; nor fell; neither can he bring it to view.

I amagin yourself at the bedside of your patient: life and death are in the balances hovering and waiting fiends surround you; looking on with anxious sorrowful hearts to see the great issue between your skill and the dread messenger. Can a man be placed in a more remarkable a more trying circumstance than this?

Self command is requisite to establish a reputation; for who would employ a physician, fearful least he may offend, fearful least his means are not adequate to overcome: and when placed in a critical situation, to be wavering and vacillating, will this produce a salutary effect

if he cannot calmly control his own mind and body, will the sick and afflicted confidingly trust in him?

Ever since the dark night of chaos was dispersed by the bright and glorious rays of the sun; God has stamped perseverance and progression upon every thing: they are twin sisters one cannot exist without the other; pursue one and you cultivate the other, neglect one, and you bid good bye to the other, he who pursues will progress; for it is as possible for the sun to alter its course, as for one to progress without perseverance.

God has stamped these virtues attributes even in the flowers of the field and in the giant monarch of the forest; first we have the blade then the ear and then the full corn in the ear; man is first an infant

Man a child, so on he progresses until he arrives at perfect manhood, the child commences with the alphabet; and as he persevers he must progress from one step to another, until he arrives where angels are exalted.

What beautiful examples these for the student; what great lessons to learn from these miniatures of Gods power and wisdom.

Of all classes of students he who must needs perseverance is the medical; he will need it when expending the midnight oil, he will need it when the would burns the cold shoulder; he will require it to insure a successful practice; in fact he cannot survive without it; then let us persevere and we must progress.

The physician must love to do good; in fact; this should be his only object; and

he should make it paramount to all others, Christ should be our example, and we should endeavor with the best of our ability to follow him.

As he left the courts of glory and heaven and took upon himself the nature and garb of man, so the physician should descend from the high and ease loving circles of society; to the low and humble cot of the poor. Shame; Shame; upon him who would refuse to attend to the wants of the poor; he who is so heartless so devoid of love, so cold and selfish as to neglect the wants of the poor for fear of not receiving a compensation; does not deserve the name of a physician; and should be deprived of his diploma and branded as a traitor to his cause He who despises the poor, despises the God

who made and sustains them.

Thus I have briefly sketched a few important things necessarily to qualify one for the responsible, arduous duties of the physician, and let us now endeavor to portray what should be his character.

Methinks we can find no being so high so elevated or occupying a more responsible position in society than him; his life is closely allied to that of our Savour; as he went about healing the sick and doing good, so the physician from earliest morn until latest night is upon errands of mercy, we see him now at the gay and splendid mansion of the rich, from thence we follow him to the miserable home of the poor, dispensing peace rendering aid, and healing the sick.

As Christ was meek and gentle, so is the

physician; no undue aspiration; renown, or ambition mad glories distract the tranquility of his mind; his only ambition is to do his office work, namely doing good; bearing the reproaches of the reprocher without a murmur; beat-him coldly and scornfully, and call him the next-hour, to attend, and he comes with a forgiving heart; abuse, and he will bless; despise and he will elevate; as Christ loved mankind and died for them, so the physician loves and if necessary would lay down his life, day by day he exposes himself to deathly influencies of disease, day by day he enters the house filled with atmosphere charged with death, and yet he heeds it not; he only sees the path of his duty before him, and this he will pursue regardless of consequences to himself.

What noble conduct this, and yet it is of

every day occurrence, why this great love, and sacrifice? because he is actuated by love and compassion for mankind, a greater love than he has for himself, for next to his God, the true physician loves his race: do you want proof. if it - then follow him and closely observe his action; does he shrink from the house of death? does he refuse to enter the chamber filled with - pestilential disease? no he only hears the groans of the sick and dying; and rushes forth - like the ready horse to battle; what greater proof shall we have that - we love us, if he endangers his own life for us.

As Christ - was poor, so is the - physician. What - a poor recompence for so great - a service. Why if a man but - saves the life of a child, from a watery grave; he is lauded to the skies, but -

the physician saves the lives of hundreds from pain and death; and receives nothing, but pain, yet frequently gaining promises of future reward; and in case he does receive it; it is not justly given, but more like the gift of the main.

The physician is also a man of sorrows for could it be possible for one so often in scenes of darkness grief, and death not to be affected could you but read his heart; could you but feel the emotions of his soul you would I am sure admit this fact; yes he is surrounded and under a calm collected exterior, there is a heart filled with sympathy for the afflicted.

A true noble hearted physician, one devoted to his profession from a love of it; is of all men most worthy of public esteem, most-

worthy of the respect and confidence of his fellow men.

A man is a man in his merit and who I ask can merit more, if we estimate a mans character by his action and every day life; the physician stands forth bold and prominent above all, if we estimate a mans worth by the amount of benefit he renders to society he should have the preference; if we applaud a man for great, self sacrificing examples; then should the physician receive the highest place.

Then let him who has taken upon himself this noble, Christ like profession go on; for truly he has chosen the greatest and most honored of all professions; toil on; God will sustain and protect you, every night watch at the bedside of your patient shall be changed

into streets of joy; every hair you shed shall be crystallized into diamonds; and deck your crown in heaven.

Are you poor and despised? so am, you shall be rich and elevated in heaven; for as Christ was raised, and ascended to glory you will be a participate with him; yes Christ-loving, man loosing physician you end shall be a triumphant one, and your last days shall be days of joy as you remind your past life and the act of mercy shined up before you in brightness your heart shall leap for joy, and rise above this earth; and your joy in heaven shall be unspeakable great; methinks I see him mount as he trust the bonds of the tomb and ascends to heaven, the angels hasten out to meet him, and as the crown of glory is being placed upon his head, and triumphant-

song of sweet welcome fills the vaulted chambers of heaven.

And what a joyful welcome does he receive from the Savior. I was hungered and ye fed me, naked and ye clothed me, sick and ye visited me.